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Immediate Release

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## **Environment Department Seeks Input for Development of Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report**

(Santa Fe, NM) – Hot on the heels of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approval of New Mexico's 2002-2004 §303(d) list, the New Mexico Environment Department's Surface Water Quality Bureau (SWQB) is developing the next, updated version of its *Integrated §303(d)/305(b) Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report*.

This report for the years 2004-2006 provides the public with a summary of the water quality status of the state's waters and the management actions necessary to protect and restore them. Also included in this report is the *List of Impaired Waterbodies* (also known as the "303(d) List"), which identifies waterbodies that do not currently meet the state's surface water quality standards.

The 2002-2004 list, recently approved by the EPA, was the first in the nation to include polluted storm waters emanating from property owned by the Department of Energy. The watercourses included on the list emanate from Los Alamos National Laboratory property and are polluted with selenium and gross alpha radiation. Los Alamos National Laboratory opposed the gross alpha listings and their inclusion on the 303(d) list.

"Despite the eight month delay, we are happy that EPA agrees with us that all waters in New Mexico deserve protection," said NMED Secretary Ron Curry. "The 303(d) list is an important tool we use to restore the health of waters around the state and we look forward to getting to work on this one as well as beginning to lay the groundwork for the next edition."

The SWQB encourages active public participation in the development of this report and is seeking the following:

### **Surface Water Quality Data**

The SWQB is soliciting chemical/physical, biological, habitat, and/or toxicological data for all surface waters of the state. **Data packages will be accepted from June 16, 2003 until close of business on July 31, 2003 and should include:** information on sampling and analysis and quality assurance/quality control procedures; data provided in electronic format; a citable report summarizing the data (if available); and contact information on the entity that generated the data set.

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**Comments on the Assessment Protocol**

SWQB is soliciting comment on the draft *State of New Mexico Procedures for Assessing Standards Attainment for the Integrated §303(d) / §305(b) Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report* (also known as the “Assessment Protocol”). The *Assessment Protocol* explains how the SWQB considers and evaluates existing and readily available surface water quality data and information to determine whether or not designated uses are currently supported based on current applicable surface water quality standards. Assessment of surface water quality data based on the *Assessment Protocol* leads to the development of the *Integrated §303(d)/§305(b) Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report*.

**Comments on the draft *Assessment Protocol* will be accepted from June 16, 2003 until close of business on July 31, 2003 and should include:** citations related to comments (if available), and contact information on the entity providing the comments.

Copies of the draft *Assessment Protocol* and related documents are available upon request or can be downloaded from the SWQB’s website at: [www.nmenv.state.nm.us/swqb](http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/swqb). Interested persons should address questions or send data packages or comments to the NMED, SWQB, attention: Lynette Stevens Guevara, 1190 St. Francis Dr., Santa Fe, NM 87505, (505) 827-2904, or e-mail: [lynette\\_guevara@nmenv.state.nm.us](mailto:lynette_guevara@nmenv.state.nm.us).

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